The Timmins Coin Club

A massive snow storm at the end of March, 1917 saw several feet of snow blanket the Porcupine gold camp. Timmins Museum photo

Back in the 1970s, I lived in Timmins, Ontario. I remember there always being lots of snow during the winter months. On one memorable occasion, a significant amount of snow fell during the night. In the morning, I discovered it was not possible to open the back door to the house due to the large pile of snow on the other side. Climbing up the chimney, fortunately, was not required as it was still possible to exit the house from the front door. With a snow shovel in hand, I made my way to the back door to do some excavation work. It was a lot of snow but nothing like the massive dumping of March 1917.

One interesting childhood memory, which has never faded away, is with respect to the family TV set. Two TV channels were available, one in English and the other in French. Since nobody in my family was fluent in French, there was never any need to change the channel selector on the TV set. Life was more difficult once the move was made to Victoria, BC as the selection of English TV channels increased to 12. The labour-intensive process of changing the channel only ended when the infrared TV remote control became readily available.

During my time in Timmins, I collected stamps while my older brother did the organizational work on the family coin collection. One day, he decided to fill a particular hole in the collection by purchasing a coin. I accompanied him to Bob's Smoke & Coin Shop to acquire a 1942 Canadian Tombac nickel. This business was owned and operated by Bob Lawryniw and his wife. The required coin was available for purchase and is now filling that hole in the family coin album.

Moving forward to the present day, Timmins still has a coin dealer. It is a home-based business operated by Orest Lawryniw, the son of Bob, and is named "Bob's Coins." As stated on his internet website, the hours of operation are 11:00 AM to 9:00 PM, seven days per week. He is available by appointment only and can be contacted via email at olawryniw@fibreop.ca.

Besides a coin dealership, Timmins also has a coin club. The Timmins Coin Club is celebrating an important milestone in 2025 by hitting the 60-year mark. There are plans to design and produce a medallion and a wooden token to commemorate this event.

The monthly club meetings, held in a relaxed environment, have no written agendas or minutes produced. The focus is on educational presentations, coin grading sessions and general discussions regarding numismatic topics. The current membership is over 44 members. Some members live as far south as Ottawa and some as far north as Moonbeam (population of 1,157). I am familiar with Schumacher and South Porcupine, both of which are now part of Timmins, but I have never heard of Moonbeam, Ontario. According to the internet, the origin of the name comes from early pioneers who claimed to have observed flashing lights falling from the sky which they called "moonbeams".

For the past 11 years, the club has hosted a show. The May 5, 2024 show was held with the Timmins Stamp Club at the McIntyre Community Centre. For the first time, the show included sports card dealers. Eight dealers were present, covering 17 tables. The total attendance at these shows is usually around 150 attendees.

The coin club also hosts a second show each year in October titled “What’s it Worth Timmins?” Members of the public are invited to bring numismatic items for a free evaluation, provided by club members.

Timmins may soon become a retirement destination for many Canadians. I recently read an article stating that working for many years before retiring is becoming an unreachable goal. With the costs of everything going up and then blasting further upwards, this article is probably “right on the money.” The good news is the city of Timmins can help you avoid working until your last gasp of breath. The Victoria benchmark price for a single-family home is $1,306,400. The median price for a similar property in Timmins is $270,000. So, once you have moved to Timmins, you will have a big pile of surplus cash. You can then afford to go on a buying spree, acquiring all those coins you have always dreamed of owning. While you are at it, don’t forget to join the Timmins Coin Club.

- Ted Skrecky

This token is for the Mediaeval Inn, a Victoria, BC restaurant, that operated from 1971 to 1980. It was located at 1005 Broad Street on the second floor of the Counting House which was built from 1883 to 1884.

As you could probably guess from the name, this restaurant was designed to give you an experience of what life was like during the Dark Ages. The female servers were known as wenches and, while eating chicken or ribs, you were allowed to throw the bones on the floor. If dogs had been allowed at this fine eating establishment, they would have all given it a rating of “two paws up.”

- Ted Skrecky

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